1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

colour sense in bead-work, it is noticeable that the best carpet weavers in Jagdalpur Jail are almost invariably Bison-horn Marias. They are quick to grasp intricacies of pattern, and there is hardly any pattern that they cannot copy. For years the chief instructor in the jail was the double murderer from Palnar already mentioned in this chapter.

The Marias of both kinds are very hospitable. On entering a Hill Maria village you are met by the elders and offered little gifts, an uncouth yam, or dried tobacco leaves and forest fruits. The whole village co-operates to get your camp ready, and to entertain you at night with song and dance. The occasional stranger from other Koitor villages or minor State official is housed and fed, provided he does not outstay his welcome or attempt to be exacting in his demands. Co-operation, in service to the State, in village festivals, in felling of forest for *penda* cultivation, in allotment of *penda* areas, in sowing, reaping, winnowing and storing of grain, in fishing and hunting, is the key to the social life of the Hill Maria, who is a natural communist; his hospitality is perhaps mainly an expression of his ingrained co-operation, though he is genuinely glad to see you after a long absence, and will greet you with tears of joy. The Bison-horn Maria is more of an individualist, or, rather, less of a communist, than the hill man, but he likes to entertain for a wedding or to celebrate the completion of a new *munda* (small rice irrigation tank) and similar occasions on a lavish scale, keeping open house. All Marias are extremely grateful for any benefit received and for sympathy and interest.

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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535 by a few men with kettle-drums and more with clanging brass gongs; to this babel of sound must be added the clatter of the innumerable iron neck-rings and the bracelets of the girls, and the clangour of the great bunches of bells on the buttocks of the male dancers. The whole scene is lit up by blazing torches and log fires.

535 831 Often a slight element of obscenity is introduced by one or two men dressed as tiger-men with large imitation *membra virilia* which they brandish at each other and at the women, girls and youths, rushing ludicrously here, there, and everywhere, and provoking such laughter that often the dancers have to break off their singing to join in.

535 868 There is no formal dancing teaching. Boys are allowed to join in the dances when they are about six, and girls when nine or ten. They learn simply by imitating their elders.

535 Men of all ages, married and unmarried, youths, boys, young wives and girls join in the Bison-horn Maria dances. There appears

● 574 to be no time of year at which they are forbidden to dance, though naturally the spring and the summer, when they are freest from field-work, see most of their dancing. If at this time of year you invite villagers to dance at your camp, the throb of the drums attracts more and more men and girls from surrounding villages; for the tradition is that no invitation is needed, and that open house should be kept at a wedding or any other occasion when there will be dancing.

2. Bison-horn Maria

535 292 There is no mixing of men and girls as in the Abujhmar hills. The girls, in their ordinary finery of beads and iron and brass neck-rings, and wearing their head snoods and fillets of polished brass, have no special dancing apparatus except the *tirdudi* dancing-sticks ornamented with iron bells which they hold upright in their right hands, clashing the bells in unison by striking the ground with the butts of the sticks on their left front as they bring their left foot across in front of their right; each girl rests her left arm on the back of the left shoulder of the girl on her left. They gyrate to the right, like the Hill Marias, but the Bison-horn women have a far more rapid step; the right foot is moved to the right and slightly to the rear, and the left foot is then brought across the right leg to the right front, while the ground is struck with the butts of the jingling dancing-sticks. The girls in this way dance fast around the outside of the dancing men, sometimes singing as they go; but the unceasing throb of the men's great drums drowns their song.

535 The women's step never varies, whatever the dance; but the men have many different dances and steps, and can improvise a dance on practically any theme, such as asking for pork or *landa*. Their *pen-harsila* or Koqsar dance is a very fast, side-stepping

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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to be a definite infiltration of Bison-horn Maria influences from Bastar. The illustration in this Supplement shows some of the Lahiri Maria girls and gives some indication of the quantity and Bison-horn style of the ornaments.

Before climbing to Kuvakodi I had sent some Marias up the valley to Nugur village in Kutru Mar, on the Indrawati banks, to invite to my camp the Kuruk boatmen who had taken Dr. Mitchell and myself in their canoes in November 1927, down the river from Nugur to the Jitam rapids.[1] Tati Ogha and Rajintappa, the leaders of our 1927 'fleet', and several of the boatmen arrived at Lahiri that evening, and recognized me, after thirteen years, with tears of joy. They were received and made at home with the utmost courtesy—that almost stately courtesy so characteristic of the Gond, whether of Marias at a feast or of Betul Gonds receiving the bride's party at the bridegroom's village; although the Bastar Hill Marias look down on Kuruks or 'Jharaman' (netters), the Lahiri headmen could not do enough for these Kuruks, giving them the best of the food, refilling their leaf-cups with *mahua* spirit, and showing a real delight when I tied a *pagri* on each Kuruk's head, and presented them with cloth and beads, while they insisted on the strangers getting the best places from which to watch the dancing.

The motor journey from Lahiri to Surjagarh, about 59 miles in all, involved a return on our outward tracks through Bhamragarh to a point three miles east of Pirmeli, thence roughly north or north-west through Kandar, Burgi and Markel villages to Chukmitapalli, and thence due east through Hitawara to Surjagarh; despite a very early start we reached Surjagarh after dark, thanks to 'receptions' in every intervening village and, above all, to delays for treating yaws patients. All these Maria villages have excellent human material, and some surprises for the visitor. At Burgi, for example, a boy dashed off to his house to emerge as a uniformed boy scout! Some years before an attempt to start a boy scout movement in Ahiri zamindari had met with some initial success, but had apparently died out. Yet this boy had carefully preserved his uniform in a leaf-box, and, more hopeful, he and some other boys had preserved the memory of the lessons they had had on cleanliness and hygiene and in a minor way were still influencing the villages to carry out what they had learnt. It is often assumed that the Marias and similar men of the backwoods have never seen anything of the outer world. Comparable with the visit of a party of Bastar Hill Marias to the Allahabad Exhibition mentioned on page 71, was the fact that this boy and some other Maria youths had been taken two or three years before to a scout jamboree at Delhi. When I asked

[1] See p. 164.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883 563 Such privileges are not universal or uncontrolled. In Junganar only very small Ganda girls may massage the boys or sleep in the ghotul; once they are mature, though they may attend the dances, they may not massage and must say Johar at a distance. This rule seems to have been made by the Ganda elders rather than by the Muria. For the Muria are generally more anxious to control the behaviour of the boys of other castes; girls are allowed to do what they like.

X 883 The relations of Muria and Muria-Lohar are discussed in more than one song. Here is a Manda dance song from Tursani village.

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Jāging poyni weke dāda roy seng bussur bhusbās?	Where are you going with your bamboo basket, brother?
Nia bāti pāri dāda?	What is your clan, brother?
Pāri ori kile bai.	I have no clan, girl.
Jāti wāde lyona bai.	I am a Lohar boy, girl.
Nima weke dān ton dāda?	Where are you going, brother?
Irum mara koyala bai	To get charcoal of mahua wood, girl.
Koyala pandi dān tona bai	I am going to make charcoal, girl.
Nana gala wāyāka dāda.	I will come with you, brother.
Nima icho wāyama bai.	Don't come with me, girl.
Jāti dube māyār bai.	Your caste will be broken, girl.
Sarus pite jori dāda.	Two cranes make a perfect pair, brother.
Jori ise ayahāt dāda.	We will pair off like them, brother.

A Har Pata, sung when the girls of Kehalakot go to dance in other ghotul at Diwali, is on the same theme.

Pāri porro nititon bai le.	On the bank of the field you were standing, girl.
Niya pāri wāti roy bai le?	What is your clan?
Pāri ori kile roy dāda le.	I have no clan, brother.
Nāwa pāri ātek roy dāda le.	If I had a clan, it would be yours.
Jāti sori layāna dāda le.	I am a girl of the Sori clan, brother.
Niya pāri wāti roy dāda le?	What is your clan, brother?
Pāri ori kile roy bai le.	I have no clan, girl.
Jāti wade layona bai le	I am a blacksmith boy.
Titi dāda uti roy dāda le,	You have eaten and drunk me, brother,
Jāti dube kiti roy dāda le.	And have made my caste sink down.

Naturally such an arrangement sometimes leads to trouble. At Sarandi a Lohar chelik ran off with a Muria motiari, and since then outsiders have not been admitted there. At Gohora, the Saidar—a Rawat boy—eloped with the Piosa who was a Muria girl, and the ghotul was henceforward closed to visitors.

VI. Relations between Different Ghotul

X 883 574 431 Members of different ghotul meet at dances, marriages and festivals. They visit each other on dancing expeditions throughout the year. Sometimes they have dancing contests. Neighbouring ghotul send gifts to each other, especially at the time of eating parched rice at Diwali. Thus when I was at Sidhawand, the boys put aside a good portion of their parched rice to send to the Kokameta ghotul with which they had relations of special friendship. At Banjora they sent one measure of rice to Bhopna and one measure to Kokori asking the boys and girls of those ghotul to share their feast. Bhopna and Kokori returned the gifts at the Chherta festival.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A 732 Gon A 732
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

Generally relations between the ghotul are friendly enough, but quarrels do occasionally arise. Once at a dance the boys of Kabonga failed to perform the Johar Par properly and salute the boys of Hatipakna who were dancing with them. The insulted chelik slung their drums over their shoulders and went away, and the Kabonga boys had to give them a rupee's worth of liquor before they would consent to dance with them again.

Formerly the boys and girls of two neighbouring villages, Kanhargaon and More Berma, used to go to the same ghotul which stood on the boundary between them. But the time came when the boys of Kanhargaon complained that they were unfairly treated in the distribution of motiari by the More Berma Kotwar. It was found impossible to adjust the matter and in the end the Kanhargaon boys and girls separated and built another ghotul just within their own village boundary not more than a hundred yards away. The members of the two ghotul meet at marriages and festivals, but they never visit one another nor do the chelik have anything to do with each other's motiari.

Boy or girl visitors from other ghotul are always warmly welcomed. When a boy's parents move from one village to another the boy automatically becomes a member of the ghotul in his new home and either retains his original title or is given a new one. A boy visitor is often put to the test. The girls push little bits of wood under their rings before they massage him 'to see how much he can stand'. By this means they can hurt a boy considerably, for even without rings the girls' massage is vigorous enough to make the skin smart and sting. If a boy passes his test successfully, the Belosa (with the approval of the Kotwar) may invite him to sleep with her. Generally a Muria boy visitor from another ghotul is given a partner for the night.

When a girl goes visiting another village she has to be more careful. She generally stays in her house and does not go to the ghotul. When the chelik hear of it they send two motiari to fetch her. They go to the house and say, 'Sister, come, do come to our ghotul'. She generally replies, 'No, sisters, no, I must not', to which the girls answer, 'O, just come for a little singing and then we will bring you home'. If she still refuses all the boys and girls go to the house and sing taunt-songs outside until she weakens. If she does go, she must return home for the night. She ought not actually to sleep in another ghotul. In some villages there is a special official whose task it is to escort such visitors home. When a motiari returns to her own village the chelik examine her very carefully and if it is proved that she slept in another ghotul, she is severely punished for what is regarded as treachery to her own boys. But this, like all Muria rules, is neither absolute nor universal. The girls who go on the Diwali dancing tours always sleep in the ghotul of the villages they visit and are entertained by the chelik.

Unknown girls are sometimes regarded with suspicion. They may not keep the menstruation rules. They may be witches in disguise. A story from Atargaon points the moral.

> There was a mother and her daughter. The daughter says, 'Marry me to someone'. The mother says, 'I know no one, daughter'. 'I will go and find a husband for myself; give me a basket and I will go today.' The girl leaves her home and starts out to search for a husband. On the way a chelik meets her. He catches her by the shoulder. 'Why have you caught me? Let me alone, brother, let me alone.' 'I won't let you go unless I take you to the jungle, then you may go.' Then says that girl, 'Very well, hold this basket for me while I relieve myself'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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She goes among the bushes and turns into a tigress. She comes roaring and kills and eats the boy.

Then she becomes a girl again and goes on her journey. She meets a man fetching wood. He speaks to her and she turns into a tigress again and kills him. At last she reaches a Saturday bazaar. The bazaar is finished but she sits down near the carts of the merchants. Four men see her beauty and desire her. She makes them all mad and they run away.

A little boy is going round the bazaar picking up scraps, bits of lac, cigarette ends, grain and other odds and ends. He sees the girl and tells his grandfather about her. That grandfather is a magician. 'Come, daughter, and marry my son.'

That night the chelik hear that a beautiful girl has come to the magician's house. 'Let's bring her to the ghotul.' They go to the house and bring her singing and dancing on the way. They make her sleep with one of the chelik. Presently she says, 'This is too crowded, let's go outside'. They go out and the boy spreads his mat while the girl goes to relieve herself outside the compound. She comes roaring, a tigress, and kills her lover, then returns as a girl to the magician's house. The chelik suspect what has happened and go again and bring her by force to the ghotul. Once again they make her sleep with a boy to discover if it was really she who was the killer. Once again she takes the boy outside and goes to relieve herself, but this time the boys are waiting armed with sticks and when she comes into the compound they fall upon her and kill her.

VII. Leaving the Ghotul

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A girl automatically leaves the ghotul when she is married and must never enter it again. In many places she gives a feast to the ghotul members either on the first day of the marriage ceremony or a week or so afterwards. Sometimes it is her duty to massage every chelik for the last time before she finally goes to her husband's house. The bridegroom also may give a present of a basket of mahua oil-seed which is pounded and cleaned, after which the motiari massage the chelik with it, including their legs.

The only exception to the rule that bars a married girl and even a widow from entering the ghotul is when a girl is married very young. She is then permitted to sleep in the dormitory and join in all its activities up to the time of her first menstrual period. In the Jamkot ghotul, for example, Kariya was married to a little girl and she continued to attend. Here they said that so long as the girl had not been sent officially to her husband, whether she had passed the menarche or no, she might continue as a motiari, but I think that this is unusual.

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Such child-marriages are comparatively rare. Where children are married, it is generally in villages where there have been scandals in the ghotul and the parents, instead of interfering with the ghotul routine, adopt this means of preventing pre-nuptial pregnancy. At Korenda I was told that 'in the old days, when there were neither roads nor motor-cars, the Muria were honest, truthful and virtuous'. A boy was not considered suitable for marriage 'until he had made two or three long trips with a load', say from Narayanpur to Kondagaon or Kondagaon to Jagdalpur. The girls were not considered ready 'until their breasts were fully grown and even beginning to slope downwards'. But now the situation has changed. *Abiha rāj halau, larka larki malau*—'The kingdom of today is black, the boys and girls are like monkeys'.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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told everyone who knew anything about the matter to make a report of suicide, and since he was a man of great influence this was done.

The remarkable thing about this case is not the violence with which the murder was committed, but the very great forbearance shown by Poda. After forgiving Kopa the first time, he himself went to the expense of marrying him to a young girl, perhaps with the idea that this would divert his attention. Even on the second occasion he refrained from physical violence, and contented himself with turning the boy out of his house. Few Maria would have failed to kill Kopa immediately after discovering him in the house at night. But all Poda did was to put the matter before the village elders. It seems to have been Kopa's impertinence in going to the hut and sitting there as if nothing had happened that suddenly deprived Poda of his self-control. The Court, taking these matters into consideration, sentenced him to only five years' imprisonment.

VI

THE MOTHER'S HOUSE

Another very common source of domestic friction is the custom that allows a girl to visit her mother's house. These visits are an exciting and important part in the life of every aboriginal girl. During her marriage ceremony many of the songs deal with the happiness of her childhood home, and the misery of a life with a husband under the domination of her parents-in-law. After marriage the mother's house acquires a sweet and romantic memory. Its hardships and quarrels are easily forgotten, and the love of one's own parents appears tender and kind compared to the constant friction of the new home. It is generally considered correct for girls to go to their parents' house for important domestic events such as the ceremonies for the birth of children, marriages and funerals, for some of the chief festivals and to help in the more urgent work of the fields. Husbands, especially young husbands, resent this, for it means one pair of hands the less to work in their own house. Girls are not always very tactful in the enthusiasm they show at returning

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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574 593 to their old homes, and some girls make a regular habit of going there, far too often for the comfort of their husbands.

574 578 There have been several suicides arising out of this situation, but only one of our hundred murders. This was the tragedy of Habka Masa who, when I saw him in jail, was a sad gaunt man utterly crushed by the tragedy that had befallen him. He had been married to his wife Pakli for some three years, and was living with his old blind parents at Hallur in the Kutru Zamindari. In June his wife went home to Gangalur for the Pen Karsita festival. Masa insisted on going with her. Two days after the festival, Masa told his father-in-law that he wanted to go back to his house, for it was the beginning of the rains and there was a lot to do. The older man was agreeable, and gave him the customary clothes and a basket of oil-seed, which is the usual present to a son-in-law when he leaves the house. But Pakli refused to go. Her parents were on the point of going to work as coolies, and she wanted to go with them. Masa, fearing that he might lose his wife altogether, decided to accompany her. The party set out and went to Gidam, a prosperous little country town on the main road, and again Masa tried to get his wife to go home. From Gidam they went to Tirthum and worked at the construction of a bridge for the P.W.D. When the bridge was ready, they all went on to Silakjhori where they got work as farm-servants. The parents-in-law built a little hut for themselves, and Masa and Pakli occupied a deserted hut belonging to sawyers. From the day of their arrival there were constant quarrels between Masa and his wife, for Masa was anxious about his cultivation—he was the only able-bodied man in the family. Pakli used to put forward every possible excuse for not going back. One day it was raining heavily. The next the rivers were flooded and she was afraid to cross them. A third day she promised to go when the rains were over.

On the night of 10 July 1939, there was heavy rain and a strong wind. After supper with the family Masa and Pakli struggled through the wind to their little hut. According to Masa's own account they then began to quarrel violently. He again asked Pakli to go home and she refused. Then he asked her to give him some tobacco, or, in other words, to have intercourse with him, and this also she

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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refused. She abused him saying, '*Puk nak*, lick my privates', and told him to go home without her. This, he said, was impossible and she again abused him. He got so angry that he hit her on the head with a heavy piece of wood and she died immediately.

More frequently these disputes have ended in suicide. The wife of Markami Pide was in love with another man, and frequently used to leave her husband and go to stay at her mother's house where it was possible for her to meet her lover. Pide as frequently would go and bring her back and beat her. At last she killed herself in despair. Mundri, the wife of the headman of Kaklur, frequently quarrelled with her husband over the question of visiting her parents, and one day when she wished to go and her husband stopped her, she became so miserable that she hanged herself from a mango tree.

Wooden tobacco box (*Length* 3[")

In two cases it was the husband who committed suicide. Marvi Gutami, a young man of twenty-two years, married a girl to whom he was much attached. Indeed it is said that he loved her so much that he was quite unable to control her, and she got on the nerves of the older women in the house who lost no opportunity of venting their spite upon her. As a result she often used to go away to her mother's house, and Gutami would have to go and bring her back. One day when this happened, the youth found that she had gone into hiding elsewhere. Despairing of happiness, he returned home and hanged himself behind his house. Kawasi Hurra's wife Lakhmi did not care for him and was always slipping away to her parents' house. He brought her back five or six times, but she would run away again after staying with him for a few days. Hurra seems to have been very fond

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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762 of the girl, and her constant absence made him so miserable
574 that he ended his life.
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A situation where the roles of the characters were reversed, and it was the mother who wished to visit the daughter's house, led to an even more pathetic tragedy.

In November 1939, a mother at Killepal was rebuked by her son and daughter-in-law for not helping them with the reaping of the kosra crop. She had been a widow for ten years and seems to have got a certain amount of pleasure and relaxation from paying visits to her married daughter at Dilmilli. This was resented by the son and brother with whom she lived. When she found that she was to be robbed even of this happiness, she killed herself.

VII

PARENTS-IN-LAW

X 674 The relationship between a man and his parents-in-law is
606 always difficult. But the general tradition in Maria, as in Hindu society, is that the older people should treat a son-in-law with respect and consideration. Neglect of this rule is apt to arouse very strong feelings in a man's mind. Marvi Kesa had three wives, the youngest of whom ran away to her parents' house after a beating. This is a common practice of aboriginal wives, and causes great annoyance to their husbands especially if the parents take their daughters' side. On this occasion Kesa followed his wife to the house and found her enjoying a drink of rice-beer with the neighbours. He went to his father-in-law and asked him why he had not sent his wife back. The older man replied casually that she had only arrived that morning, and this answer so annoyed Kesa that he struck him on the head with his axe and killed him.

In another case it was the mother-in-law who was the victim. Marvi Hinga took his wife Hirme, who was suffering from fever, to a neighbouring village to a Siraha for treatment. He stayed with her during the night and the next morning returned to his house, where he was seen by his mother-in-law. She, thinking that he had left her daughter uncared for and was now wandering about the village seeking enjoyment, abused the youth saying that he